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ABSTRACT

In response to proposed federal Job Training 2000 legislation, which called for three elements--skill centers, performance-based certification, and vouchering--a series of six forums were held throughout the state of Idaho in 1992. The forums were conducted by a team of staff from the Departments of Employment, Health and Welfare, and Education, in conjunction with the six private industry councils in the state. About 200 persons, representing employers, program participants, members of various boards and councils, and service providers in the employment and training community, participated. The result of the hearings was that the underlying principles of Job Training 2000 were widely accepted, although there were a number of reservations with the details of the legislation--in particular, the governance structure which was considered to add to the administrative burden, the thought that the legislation detracted from the degree of coordination already in place, and what programs were excluded or included. The discussions on improving the existing service delivery system yielded the most exciting opportunities for partners in the employment and training system. The most widely requested improvement was better information sharing among agencies. The second major focus related to program design issues, reflecting increases in use of alternate delivery formats such as mentoring, tutors, and internships, and in promoting the use of current system options such as tech prep. Forum attendees identified transportation as the most needed support service. Suggestions were also made to improve public understanding of the need for highly skilled workers. At the conclusion of the forums, a workgroup was formed to try to find ways to implement the suggestions made during the study. (The report contains summaries of the findings of each of the forums and a summary of the proposed Job Training 2000 legislation.) (KC)

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JOB TRAINING 2000

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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Recommendations for Improving the Idaho Job Training System

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To our readers:

Job Training 2000 gave us an opportunity to examine the employment and training delivery system throughout the state and listen to what the customers, the practitioners and stakeholders thought was most important. As we travelled across the state, we were impressed by the partners' level of commitment to improve services for the citizens of the State of Idaho. The desire to improve access for our customers by working more closely together to learn about each other's programs and by eliminating unnecessary information gathering at the client level was shared in all areas of the state. Time and time again, we saw a commitment to building a high quality workforce for the state and ensuring that the systems which support it operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

We would like to thank all of you who participated in this effort by giving us your time and your thoughts. It has provided invaluable information. We would like to give special recognition to the staff of the six Private Industry Councils who helped to coordinate the forums at the local level. We would also like to thank Dr. Mel Streeter and Mr. Bill Tennant of Lewis-Clark State College, Dr. Sharon Cook and Dean Tom MacGregor of Boise State University and Mr. Bill Robertson of Eastern Idaho Vocational Technical School for making their facilities and hospitality available to us. Special thanks, too, to the ISU Decision Center for introducing us to the potential of computer conferencing. Finally, we would like to thank our leadership for demonstrating their commitment to improve the system by giving us the time and encouragement to pursue this project and the Department of Labor for financing the forums.

We have been in a position to use much of this information as we worked together to improve our individual programs. We believe we have been able to build upon the solid foundation of coordination that has been in place for some time. We are ready now to begin moving forward with this effort on a more integrated basis. We would encourage you to join with us in making a streamlined system for all of our customers.

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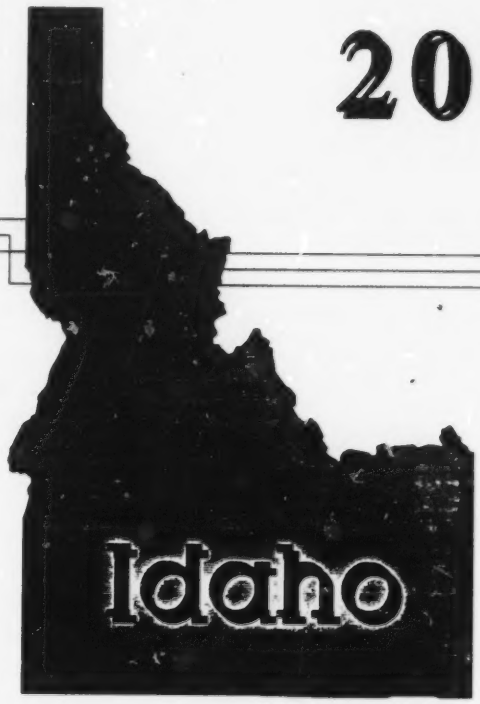

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Recommendations for Improving
the Idaho Job Training System

JOB TRAINING 2000
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Proposal

Former President Bush introduced Job Training 2000 in January of 1992. In his announcement the President called for a reform of the "Federal Vocational Training" programs calling them fragmented, inefficient and difficult to access with limited input from the business community. The program was intended to provide a framework for tying together more than sixty Vocational Education and Job Training programs into a coherent employment and training system. In order to accomplish this goal, the legislation outlined three elements -- Skill Centers, performance based certification, and vouchering. Once implemented, job seekers and potential training clients would be armed with adequate information to make informed choices regarding employment and training opportunities.

The Skill Centers were designed to provide a menu of services that would furnish employers and applicants with information about jobs, training opportunities and their performance, labor market information and various job counselling and job seeking skills training opportunities, as well as referral to jobs and training. Skill Centers were not designed to provide occupational or basic skills training; rather, these Centers were to serve as brokers to the various programs in existence.

A system would also be set up to "certify" training providers as eligible for receipt of Federal training funds. States in conjunction with the local Private Industry Councils would set up a process to gather information on such items as training completion rates, job placement, loan default rates, and other information expected to demonstrate success. This information would be available to all potential customers.

Finally, the legislation embraced the concept of choice by proposing a system whereby clients who were seeking training would be given vouchers to shop for training providers. Only a portion of the payment would be made prior to the placement of a client in a job.

The Challenge

The President challenged Governors to explore this proposal and offered grants to states to develop their own solutions. While our employment and training system enjoys a much higher level of coordination than the large majority of states, we were excited by the opportunity to improve our system even further.

We accepted the challenge by developing an interagency facilitation team to explore the legislation and to discuss the opportunities and barriers in the proposals. We also took the opportunity to look at Idaho's current system of service delivery and identify areas where improvements could be made for the benefit of our customers -- those seeking employment, training, and placement services as well as the employers who ultimately employ these individuals.

The Job Training 2000 team, comprised of staff from the Department of Employment, Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Vocational Education, and the Department of Education, in conjunction with the six private industry councils, hosted "JT2000" forums across the State. A broad spectrum of stakeholders answered our call -- employers, program participants, members of various boards and councils and service providers in the employment and training community.

The Response

The 200 individuals who attended these forums made a significant number of recommendations relative to JT2000 and our current system. These were reviewed in September by a broad based group of

interagency personnel, and recommendations were subsequently adopted by the leadership of the workforce development organizations in November of 1992.

The underlying principles of Job Training 2000 were widely accepted -- improving access for the customers of the employment and training system, increased accountability of training providers, and improved quality of training. There were a number of reservations, however, with the details of the legislation. In particular, the governance structure was thought to add to the administrative burden and many thought that the legislation detracted from the degree of coordination already in place. There was also concern about the programs that were excluded or included in the program. In particular, employers expressed concern about breaking up the Unemployment Insurance and Employment Service systems while educators were equally concerned with limiting access points to Pell Grants for students. The lack of connection with the secondary system was also noted as peculiar in a discussion of education and training systems. In general, forum participants favored multiple points of access, the "no wrong door" approach, rather than a single physical site, and called for expanded communications to support the system.

In the case of certification, the response was much the same. The issue of accountability was widely accepted, but the process was regarded as burdensome and failing in its use of existing performance and accountability systems. In general, participants favored state run processes which would build upon those already in place.

The response to the voucher system was as broad as one might expect given the divergent views regarding the impact of choice on educational quality. In a state such as Idaho, choice was less of an issue than access. The notion that withholding of 20% of voucher payments until a client was placed was seen as placing further barriers to access for the disadvantaged populations, since public facilities could ill afford to further subsidize training.

While this legislation is no longer being considered, much of what was expressed by forum participants is germane to similar initiatives now being considered by the Clinton administration. These include proposals for school to work transition, consolidation of Dislocated Worker programs, development of one stop Career Centers, expansion of labor market information systems, and welfare reform. Comments submitted by forum participants will be of considerable assistance to policy makers as positions on new legislation are developed.

The Idaho System

The discussions on improving our existing service delivery system for the benefit of our mutual customers yielded the most exciting and challenging opportunities for partners in the employment and training system. There was a general agreement that Idaho is ahead of the game in terms of working together for the benefit of our customers. Nonetheless, a number of themes emerged as we took comments from each of the six Regions.

Perhaps the most widely requested "process improvement" was to improve information sharing among agencies. These requests were universal in terms of eliminating the need for capturing duplicate information from clients as they move from agency to agency and in sharing intake and assessment information. There was also a demand for sharing more program information among the partners in the system. The suggestions ranged from creating local electronic service directories, to conducting interagency meetings and training, improving access to labor market information, to considering joint needs assessment and planning.

The second major focus related to program design issues. These reflected increases in use of alternate delivery formats such as mentoring, tutors, internships, etc., and in promoting the use of current system

options such as tech-prep. Attendees also were fairly consistent in their identification of a lack of supportive services for customers; transportation was regarded as a particularly acute problem in our rural State. Various suggestions were made to modify the program standard and reporting of outcomes. Again numerous recommendations were made to deal with rural areas; joint outreach, satellite offices, waivers and simply making sure that program objectives reflect local economic needs.

Attendees also introduced a number of solutions for resolving labor market issues. Much of this relied upon increasing the general understanding of the community regarding the connection between high skills and high wages and in better promoting opportunities available. One clearly important area was to better identify employer needs by expanding their participation. Finally, attendees asked that we view services from the "total quality" or "quality" approach.

At the conclusion of the local forums, a group of staff from workforce development agencies met to review the recommendations one-by-one. These were then forwarded to the leadership of the agencies who unanimously agreed that work teams would be developed to explore each of the recommendations. The leadership agreed that they would continue meeting to review these recommendations as they emerged from the teams.

What Has Been Done?

The first meeting of the workgroup was not held until September of this year. Many of the individuals involved in the effort were also involved in the implementation of JTPA Amendments which were passed just as this process was being initiated. We can lay claim to a number of small victories in the JTPA implementation process that responded to the findings in the JT2000 report, but some of the more difficult and time consuming efforts are still before us.

In terms of the JTPA implementation, we enjoyed substantial interagency participation in drafting of the Governor's Goals and Objectives and Coordination Criteria for the Governor's consideration. There was significant interagency participation on the assessment team; we are hopeful that this will provide the groundwork for the ultimate goal of broad based information sharing among participating agencies. We believe the 8% Education and Coordination Grant is a model of coordination between the education system and the job training system and reflects the kind of joint planning effort that can be carried into other endeavors.

We expect the remainder of the recommendations to be considered over the next several months. The work plan will line out the schedule and priorities for action based upon continuing input from our customers. As requested, we will use total quality management principles to guide this planning and implementation process. We are committed to improving our processes to better serve the citizens of the State of Idaho.

JOB TRAINING 2000
STATE STAFF REVIEW
Boise - September 30, 1992

Key staff from various workforce and workforce related agencies met to review recommendations from the six Regional Job Training 2000 Meetings. Prior to the meeting, these individuals were provided copies of the Regional reports together with a summary of proposed Job Training 2000 legislation. Staff from the Department of Employment consolidated these recommendations into the attached summary; this was used as the basis for the discussion. Staff set the stage by reviewing the local reactions to Job Training 2000 and the general format of the local meetings. A discussion of specific recommendations followed. The meeting concluded with consideration of additional recommendations and the development of a structure to support continuing action on the issues and recommendations that were raised.

Recommendations for Program Improvement - Local

Staff reviewed each of the items in the attached list on an item-by-item basis. We discussed the viability of pursuing each issue, offered rationale, and developed recommendations for follow-up action by a single agency or the group as a whole. We tended to favor review of activities by an interagency action team unless the response was clearly a single-agency activity. In the case of JTPA, the Department will take the lead, but is committed to the inclusion of partner agencies in the implementation strategy. We concurred that all recommendations were deserving of a response with indication as to whether action was via group or single agency.

In general, the group in attendance concurred that the State should develop a process to explore the issues. The general areas for exploration are as follows:

I. **Improve Information Sharing Among Agencies**

In the area of participant information, the local level reported a high level of interest in easing the burden on clients by providing a means to share information gathered by one agency with others who require similar information. This resulted in recommendations for development of client-sensitive, common intake records and common assessment instruments. To support this basic theme, there were numerous recommendations for development of common definitions, a common data base and "credit card" for intake and referral, and various other means to contribute to increased access for the client via improved communication. Additionally, there was a recommendation to explore a common recruitment, assessment, and referral center. One of the participants remarked that this is likely to be required in the future and should also be considered. The recommendations were all accepted as needing exploration for implementation.

The second major area of concern centered on the lack of program information for both staff and program clients. Various recommendations were made to improve the situation. Participants wanted information available electronically, via such systems as ALEX or CIS and in hard copy in the form of localized, client friendly pamphlets. To improve communications among staff, cross training, bulletin boards, inter-agency meetings, and outstationing were suggested. Often PICs were suggested as a coordinating entity. The need for improved labor market information for career guidance was also suggested. Again, State participants believed these areas demanded further exploration and should be pursued.

The local level also made recommendations for joint planning at the State level, development of common needs assessments, and standardization of the planning calendars. This drew a number of comments from the State Meeting, but there was general agreement that we needed to move further to enhance our coordination efforts and should take action on these areas.

II. **Program Design Issues**

The local participants made recommendations in two general areas: improvement in program training options and increased supportive services. In the area of expanded training, participants suggested an expanded case management approach and the use of more intensive service strategies. In all cases, State participants felt these should be pursued. In the case of supportive services, transportation was the key area of concern requiring multi-agency response. All recommendations were targeted for review.

In a like area, options were offered for improving services to rural areas. Conducting joint outreach, development of satellite offices, and developing programs reflective of local economies were all viewed as necessary areas for further review and action.

III. **Labor Market Issues**

Participants often cited conflicts in labor market goals - the desire of business to control costs with the desire of the workers to earn a livable wage. A number of solutions were seen including the need to educate the community about the relationship of education and training to high skill jobs, a vital economy and high wages. Others recommended educating employers about the options available via training programs and having programs gather information about employer needs. The economic development representative noted that when they seek to develop jobs, they of course intend to attract the high skill jobs; but that others with lower wages also respond. Additionally, he noted concerns when the workforce is not trained to take high skill jobs that some companies offer. The State staff felt that this was also an area that demanded attention.

IV. **Quality**

Participants responded to local recommendations concerning TQM and quality stating that all efforts to be undertaken should be done in accordance with the principles of TQM. All agreed that the focus on the customer, participation of affected groups and a commitment to improving the quality of services would be the driving force behind the effort.

State Response - Organization

State staff were committed to pursuing these efforts. During the discussions a number of issues arose. First, it was felt that if the efforts were to be successful, agency directors need to "sanction" the activities to be pursued. A number of participants suggested the need for an overriding workforce development policy to guide the effort. In one case, it was suggested that staff from the various agencies needed to know that there was a commitment to move from cooperation and information sharing to a more collaborative effort. Another suggested that the Brandeis University case management model needed to be explored by agency directors (this essentially requires a commitment from the highest levels of State government to commit time and resources to create a collaborative, seamless system of service delivery). Yet another suggested the need for the development of a common set of goals to guide the system, while another from Vocational Education suggested their agency's willingness to participate in a workforce development strategy.

There was universal agreement among the staff that we needed to set an organization in place to accomplish the activities recommended; however, we did not come to a consensus on all aspects of such an organization. We agreed that it is critical for agency directors to commit to this program improvement effort by participating in policy level decisions. We also felt the need for agency directors to appoint staff who could work together regularly to develop policy recommendations and to oversee implementation of the recommendations. Because the effort is so large, we envisioned the need for this second level work

group to establish a variety of inter-agency teams, set priorities, oversee activities and bring issues forward. Due to the lateness of the day, we did not reach consensus on the size and character of the group. Some suggested that it should be a very large group, perhaps made up of those who were invited to the State Meeting, while others felt a smaller group appointed by directors would be most appropriate. We left this as a matter to be decided by directors.

During the discussion, we also heard the need for participation of the private sector and others in the system. We concurred but did not see this group as substituting for the existing boards and councils (IJTC, SCOVE, PICs, etc). Rather, we saw the need for an interagency effort to identify issues and develop recommendations for the leaders at the State level and for our councils. One of the participants suggested that the Idaho Job Training Council could serve as a forum for these recommendations since most of the directors participate or are represented. If this avenue is chosen, the Governor may wish to review the make-up of the council.

Summary

The State staff wholeheartedly supported the idea of developing work groups to prioritize activities and implement work teams to address the issues raised at the local level. While the exact make-up of the teams was left in question, staff felt further action could take place only through the sanction and commitment of agency directors. State staff added to the local level findings by calling for the development of a workforce development strategy with common goals to guide our mutual efforts. It appears that the entire system is poised to move beyond coordination to the development of a truly joint effort.

JT2000 REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT
Miscellaneous Issues Assigned to Individual Agencies and/or Referred to Local Level

	REGIONS						AFFECTED ORGANIZATION
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
A. Sharing Participant Information							
1. Simplify JTPA enrollment process		X					JTPA/AGING
B. Sharing Program Information							
1. Create local service directory of services available, eligibility criteria, etc. (CIS/ALEX/electronic billboards, also hard copy)	X	X	X	X	X	X	LOCAL/ ALL
2. Utilize monthly newsletters to inform providers of "happenings"	X		X				LOCAL
3. Conduct interagency meetings; PICs should take leadership	X	X	X	X X	X	X	LOCAL
4. Develop local speakers' bureau to make presentations from program to program		X		X			LOCAL
C. Program Design							
1. Develop vocational CRT options in other than semester format			X				VOC ED/ JOBS
D. Supportive Services							
1. Increase mental health funding		X		Xm			DHW
2. Increase accessibility of child care grant/increase reimbursement rate; streamline intake process				X			DHW
E. Increase JTPA Administrative Dollars				Xm			JTPA

m = Issue was brought up as a miscellaneous comment, rather than as a priority issue

	REGIONS						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
F. Modify Measures of Success							
1. Expand 90-day placement component	X				X		JTPA
2. Expand definition of positive termination to be more client driven	X						JTPA
3. Modify performance standard system to be less numbers driven .	X					X	JTPA
4. Improve reporting by trade schools and apprenticeship programs on status of program completers	X						?
G. Rural Issues							
1. Increase use of "800" numbers to provide access to rural clients		X					ALL
2. Create satellite offices across programs		X					ALL
3. Explore use of program waivers to increase flexibility (re: JOBS)		X					DHW
Miscellaneous							
A. Improve Financial Information System							
1. Provide clear, timely, customer-friendly reports which allow limited sharing with other agencies	Xm	X					JTPA

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15

m = Issue was brought up as a miscellaneous comment, rather than as a priority issue

JT2000 REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

	REGIONS I	II	III	IV	V	VI	AFFECTED ORGANIZATION
Guiding Principles:							
1 - These recommendations should be implemented following the basic principles of Total Quality Management.							
2 - In implementing these principles, we should all strive for a common definition of "quality outcomes."							
I. Improve information sharing among agencies							
A. Participant Information							
1. Develop client-sensitive common intake forms across agencies	X	X	X	X	X	X	ALL
a. Use initial application page with information common to all providers	X		X				ALL
b. Use interagency team to develop information common to all providers			X				
2. Develop local referral card/"eligibility credit card"/ single eligibility certificate		X	Xm	X			ALL
3. Develop common assessment that is broad in scope; instrument that can be used by all agencies including automated, retrievable information	X	X				X	ALL
4. Develop common definitions	X	X	X			X	ALL
5. Develop common database (not at expense of staff or participant dollars)	X	X	X	X	X	X	ALL
6. Explore a common recruitment/assessment and referral center	Xm						

m = Issue was brought up as a miscellaneous comment, rather than as a priority issue

	REGIONS						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
7. Reduce/modify confidentiality requirements so information can be shared (client consent needed)	X	X	X	X			ALL
B. Program Information							
1. Create local service directory of services available, eligibility criteria, etc. (CIS/ALEX/electronic billboards, also hard copy)	X	X	X	X	X	X	LOCAL/ ALL
2. Cross train staff for common skill building	X	X	X	X	X	X	ALL
3. Conduct interagency informational meetings on a regular schedule	X	X	X	X	X	X	ALL
4. Develop user-friendly, population-appropriate handouts/pamphlets for use by clients/providers		X	X	X			LOCAL/ ALL
5. Develop more labor market information for career planning and vocational guidance	X					X	EMPLOY/ VOC ED/ COMM
6. Outstation staff with other agencies	X						ALL
7. Consider joint planning at State level;	Xm						ALL
conduct common needs assessment;			Xm				
standardize planning calendar			Xm				
II. Program Design Issues							
A. Training-Related							
1. Utilize more mentors/tutors/volunteer coordinators/internships/ basic skills/pre-employment training/job shadowing	Xm		Xm		Xm		ALL
2. Promote vocational training, apprenticeships, tech prep	X			X			JTPA/JOBS/ LOCAL
3. Utilize case management teams	X		X	X			ALL

m = Issue was brought up as a miscellaneous comment, rather than as a priority issue

	REGIONS						
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
B. Supportive Services							
1. Provide more dollars for supportive services				X			ALL
2. Improve ways to meet transportation needs of participants, such as:		X		X			ALL
a. Coordinate transportation with school buses and Area Agency on Aging							
b. Lobby legislative committee working on transportation							
c. Contact Idaho Transportation Dept. to identify services and grant possibilities							
C. Improve Services to Rural Areas							
1. Conduct joint outreach among cooperating agencies		X			X		ALL
2. Develop programs with reasonable expectations for outcomes that reflect local economy				X		X	JTPA/ VOC ED
III. Labor Market Issues							
A. Resolve Conflict in Customer Goals Between Client and Employer							
1. Include key economic development people on workforce quality teams	X						ALL
B. Provide Suitable Jobs at Livable Wages							
1. Encourage services and educate community to emphasize high skill training and career advancement	X			X		X	ALL
2. Outlaw subsidization of low-paying jobs	X						JTPA
C. Improve Information to Employers About Employment and Training Services and Increase Input from Employers Regarding Their Needs .	Xm	X		X		X	ALL

m = Issue was brought up as a miscellaneous comment, rather than as a priority issue

JOB TRAINING 2000
THE BUSH PROPOSAL

Former President Bush introduced Job Training 2000 in January of 1992. In his announcement, the President called for a reform of Federal Vocational Training programs calling them fragmented, inefficient and difficult to access with limited input from the business community. He remarked that inadequate quality controls have allowed hundreds of unscrupulous proprietary institutions to take billions of dollars in Federal subsidies without providing effective training. The initiative is intended to reform the "current complex maze of programs into a job training system responsive to the needs of individuals, businesses, local and regional economies, and the national economy."

The Act targets some 60 Vocational Education and Job Training programs administered by seven Federal agencies. At the national level, a Federal Vocational Council made up of the Secretaries of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs would oversee implementation of the Act and would be charged with creating consistency in policy, practices and procedures.

The participation of the private sector would expand at all levels. Nationally, a Private Sector Vocational Advisory Board would be created, while at the State level, a variety of councils would be consolidated into a Human Resource Investment Council with a majority of private sector members. At the local level, a revised and expanded Private Industry Council would oversee the local delivery system for Vocational Education and employment and training.

The program itself includes three basic elements which affect a broad range of clients and programs in different ways.

Skill Centers

Each Private Industry Council, after a broad consultation process, would designate a network of Skill Centers within the Service Delivery Area. Any entity operating within the service area could apply provided it met minimum qualifications. These Skill Centers would serve as "one stop shopping" points of entry to provide workers and employers with easy access to information about Vocational Training programs, labor markets, and employment options.

Clients would be provided with a menu of services available to them at the Centers. A review of the mandatory or "core" services available at the Centers suggests that they may be more appropriately named Assessment or Job Centers. Core services include a preliminary assessment of skill levels and service needs of each individual; information relating to local demand occupations and the earnings and skill requirements of these occupations; information relating to apprenticeships; information relating to local, State and National labor markets and job vacancy listings in these markets; career counseling and planning; employability development including assistance in preparation of resumes, job interview techniques and work deportment; information relating to job training and education programs; information relating to Vocational Training programs and their performance; intake for participating programs; referrals to programs providing Vocational Training, basic skill, and supportive services; referrals to employment opportunities; accepting job orders; issuing vouchers; and job search and placement assistance.

In addition, "enhanced services" may be offered through the Skill Centers. These include specialized and comprehensive assessments, development of service strategies and employability plans and case management. "Specialized employer services" could also be offered for a fee including customized screening and referral, customized assessment of current employees, and analysis of workforce needs.

Certain programs **must** participate in the operation of a Skill Center. Core services for JTPA Title II programs, the Job Corp, Job Service, the JS Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled

Veterans Outreach program could only be offered via the Skill Centers. JOBS and Food Stamp employment and training participants determined by those programs to require Vocational Training would also be referred to the Skill Centers. These programs would be required to enter into an agreement with the agency designated as a Skill Center and the Private Industry Council to negotiate the resource contributions to the Skill Centers.

Applicants for Pell Grants or other financial aid for Vocational Education would also be referred to Skill Centers; however, no provisions are made to pay for this new service. Job listings and placement activities could be offered by participating programs outside of the Skill Center. If access is limited due to the rural nature of the area, services could also be offered. Other programs such as post-secondary Vocational Education, Adult Basic Education, and Dislocated Worker programs could also participate.

Governors could award incentive grants to Skill Centers from either Job Service or JTPA funds, if they meet performance standards. Performance standards would be based on placement, retention, and earnings in employment; placement in Vocational Training programs; completion of training; and meeting the needs of the local labor market.

Performance Based Certification

The Private Industry Council (PIC), in conjunction with a designated State Agency, would certify that job training programs meet established standards before Federal funds could be spent. The programs subject to this requirement include those listed above as well as programs serving Dislocated Workers under JTPA Title III and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds, Carl Perkins Vocational Technical funds, Veterans Vocational Training, and Refugee Assistance.

The standards would be based on such factors as rate of licensure of graduates, job placement, rate of withdrawal, loan default rate, job retention, earnings of graduates and reasonableness of costs. Standards would be set by the Federal Council. The State Agency designated to certify Vocational Training programs would set guidelines for the PICs and would gather and analyze data related to the performance of the institutions. When an organization submits an application, the State Agency would transmit the data to the PIC which would certify that the training organization meets standards.

This is the only section of the Act which provides for additional funding to be distributed to PICs.

Vouchers

The Act provides for a voucher system to enhance the choices available to the client and to promote competition among the providers to improve quality. Participating programs include JTPA Title II (programs for youth and adults) and Dislocated Worker programs under Title III.

Vouchers would list the course of study, set dollar amounts to be paid, and meet requirements that would allow the client to shop for the best services. At least 20% of the voucher would be withheld from the service provider until the client completed training and was retained in employment for 90 days. Vouchers are also intended for OJT, but no withholding is required.

Exceptions to the voucher system would be allowed where there are insufficient numbers of providers or if providers are unable to serve special population groups.

JOB TRAINING 2000
IDAHO'S RESPONSE

In response to President Bush's introduction of the Job Training 2000 legislation, six Regional forums, attended by 199 participants, were conducted across the State to solicit comments and concerns about the concepts envisioned in the package. We have consolidated these comments, provided from across the State, below.

Participants included a broad spectrum of stakeholders including employers, program participants, members of various boards and councils and service providers in the employment and training system.

General Comments

The majority of participants supported the legislation's philosophical premise of improved access to services, increased accountability by program operators, and improved quality of training. There are, however, a number of reservations about the manner in which the legislation proposes to meet these goals.

People across the State are concerned about the overly prescriptive nature of this legislation, and believe that it may well create more duplication, rather than less, as it is purported to do. There is a general consensus that this legislation places more administrative burden on existing programs without additional funding and that this, with its own burden of regulations and performance standards, will not likely result in savings to the existing system. While nearly all forum participants embrace a goal of moving the United States toward improved competitiveness and a world-class workforce, a great many individuals are expressing doubt that this bill is the appropriate vehicle for doing this.

Many features of this legislation appear to be designed to meet the needs of more urban areas and do not lend themselves to conditions in more rural states, such as Idaho.

Comments specific to the three major features of the legislation follow.

Skill Centers

The Skill Centers, as constructed in the legislation, received only limited support in this State. Many Idahoans believe that what we have and what we do now work well in a cooperative mode and that no single point of entry is required. Many noted that we already employ the Skill Center concept; however, there are separate access points for clients with special needs when the local area determines this is most appropriate.

Some sentiment has been expressed that these one stop shops could result in more comprehensive, less fragmented assessment of participant needs. Conceptually, this is a laudable goal, but the inclusion of certain programs and exclusion of similar, related programs as mandatory in Skill Center operations seems to obviate success in this effort. It is not at all clear, for example, why the Unemployment Insurance program, Dislocated Worker programs, and programs funded under Carl Perkins Act have been excluded while Pell Grant programs have been included. The employers were particularly concerned that they have a voice in shaping Skill Centers to preserve the labor-exchange focus of the Employment Service. Forum participants were also concerned that the participation requirements for Skill Centers might result in the exclusion of small service providers, as they are not likely to have the financial resources required to participate.

Considerable concern has been raised about the process for designating Skill Centers and the negotiation process required between PICs and Skill Center operators in setting up the Centers. It is important to recognize that members of Private Industry Councils are volunteer, lay citizens and may not have either the time or knowledge necessary to meet management and oversight responsibilities without additional resources.

Forum participants believe that for the Skill Center concept to work in Idaho, the legislation must provide sufficient flexibility to structure Skill Centers in a manner that best meets the rural needs of this State. Some suggested the entire State should be exempt from Skill Center model requirements because of our rural nature and the fact that meeting these requirements would limit access to services for many of the more rural areas.

It was also the belief of the participants that our limited resources could be better utilized by strengthening the existing delivery system by emphasizing joint staff meetings, training sessions, and development of common instruments for assessment and intake processes.

Certification

The certification process was generally viewed as cumbersome and participants favored more streamlined, state-run processes. It is not clear in the proposed legislation how the certification would work on an interstate basis (e.g., whose certification process will be in effect when Idaho participants are sent into a neighboring state?)

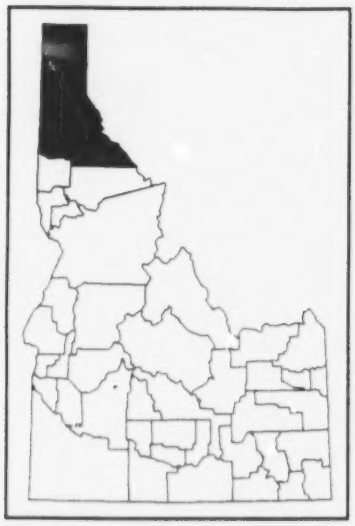
There is general agreement in this State that certification procedures in place should be utilized and modified as necessary to include proprietary schools, rather than creating another layer of certification requirements as proposed in the legislation.

Vouchering

The proposed vouchering system has been greeted with widespread concern and little support in Idaho. Participants believe that the 20% holdback provision will create financial hardships for providers, particularly small providers, and will result in creaming of participants. Participants are also concerned that the process for and cost of managing and tracking the voucher system would be prohibitive and would far outweigh the benefits. In a state where most Vocational Training opportunities exist in an already excellent public system, participants see little merit in this feature of the legislation.

Summary

In summary and as stated above, those in attendance support the underlying philosophy of this legislation. They do not, however, believe that the proposed legislative package will enable a rural state like Idaho to accomplish the legislation's stated purpose. Support is needed to ensure that any legislative package of this nature contains sufficient flexibility so that it can be tailored to meet Idaho's needs.



JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
COEUR D'ALENE
July 14, 1992

Following an overview of Job Training 2000, forum participants were divided into three groups to discuss the legislative concepts. In general, participants all agreed that the lack of detail in the legislation made analysis difficult. Comments offered by the three groups have been consolidated below.

Skill Centers

The concept of Skills Centers received only limited support in this Region. These people believe that what they have and what they do now works well in a cooperative mode and that no single point of entry is required. They questioned whether some programs would be left out of the delivery system if they had to pay-to-play in a Skill Center.

Some felt that one stop shops make sense if they provide assessment, information, and referral services without establishing a separate layer or other agency. Most felt that Vocational Education clients who do not need the services of a Skill Center should not be required to participate. Concerns were raised about designating several different agencies as Skill Centers and the resulting complications to statewide coordination and service support systems. It was noted, for example, that this would be especially harmful to Employment Service's statewide systems.

One person supported the concept of the single point of contact for program services, assessment, eligibility and program information, stating that he believed this would lead to more streamlined processes and easier program access for the participants, and may help those that currently fall through the cracks.

Concerns were raised about where the funds would come from to pay for additional responsibilities of Skill Centers and the potential impact on existing programs and service levels to clients. Participants generally agreed that, if passed, this legislation should carry with it enough funds to pay for the increased volume and intensity of services and the costs of tracking Skill Center outcomes and performance standards.

Many felt a better utilization of the limited resources would be to strengthen the existing delivery system by emphasizing joint staff meetings, training sessions, and development of common instruments for assessment and intake processes. Most felt that the Skill Center concept would be less efficient and more costly to operate.

Accountability or lack thereof was discussed--Who is accountable overall??? The PICs? Employers? The schools? There was concern expressed about the lack of provisions to resolve disputes in the negotiation process between the PICs and service providers in establishing the Service Centers.

Several questions were raised on the subject of financial aid to students. Participants commented that the apparent rationale for including Pell Grant recipients in Skill Centers applies as well to student loans. They stated that the legislation should include a mechanism to control who gets financial aid and how it can be used--perhaps a requirement that Skill Centers give precise information about financial aid and the consequences for default and require that participants sign a "Truth in Disclosure" form. It was also suggested that income tax refunds should be withheld if financial aid payback requirements are not met.

Certification

The certification process raised a number of concerns in this Region. Specifically, participants questioned how it will work on an interstate basis. (Whose certification process will be in effect when Idaho participants are sent into the Spokane area?) It was also suggested that the Vocational Education system already has an extensive "certification" system in place--Northwest Association of Accreditation for schools, State Board for programs, and Advisory Committees for programs. Why add another one? One participant noted that apprenticeship programs should be monitored for quality to ensure that actual training is taking place.

Vouchering

The proposed vouchering system was greeted with widespread concern and little support. Most felt that the 80% payment provision would result in a reduction of available training options for Skill Center participants as schools would recruit students who would pay full fees up front. Also, there was concern that schools would raise fees to cover the risks of serving Skill Center participants and that school would resort to "creaming" to increase the potential to receive full funding. Many felt that the requirement to limit vouchers to the total amount of funds available would reduce service levels. There was widespread concern on how the vouchers would be managed and tracked.

The general consensus in this Region is that this legislation is overkill and that it overlays another bureaucratic layer on a system that works well now. The current system, operated in a cooperative environment, is tolerant to change versus the more structured and mandated confines of the proposed legislation.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT DELIVERY SYSTEM
REGION I

The process for recommending improvements to the current delivery system involved separating participants into three groups, each of whom identified three topics to discuss in detail. Following these group discussions, participants were given an opportunity to offer additional comments on ways to improve services. The discussions covered a wide variety of topics which have been consolidated below. Recommendations included identifying mechanisms to improve communication among agencies, reducing redundant informational demands on program participants, resolving conflicts in customer goals, improving measures of program success and the appropriateness of applying training solutions to economic problems. The group topics are presented first, followed by miscellaneous comments.

Group Topic Suggestions

A. Improve Information Exchange Among Programs/Agencies

1. Develop common definitions
2. Conduct more interagency meetings, PIC workshops and joint training
3. Reduce/modify confidentiality requirements
4. Utilize monthly newsletters and brochures
5. Develop local service directory with brief eligibility and target group information. (Possibly on an electronic billboard, ALEX or Career Information System, or something like the Youth Yellow Pages)
6. Develop a mechanism by which staff across agencies can share client information, such as a computerized common database
7. Outstation staff with other agencies

B. Reduce Duplication and Barriers to Services

1. Use a pre-application guide or initial application page containing information common to all service providers
2. Use a common database
3. Use a common assessment process (form/test)
4. Use common assessment language
5. Share assessment information among service providers
6. Share feedback of assessment with client
7. Improve assessment validation
8. Assessment must be client centered, include long and short range goals, holistic in scope and provided in a manner which enables the participant to decide their options
9. Develop more labor market information that can be used for local career planning and vocational guidance

C. Conflict in Customer Goals between Clients and Employers (clients want training for high paying jobs, while employers want to keep wages and operating costs low)

1. Include key economic development individuals on all workforce quality teams
2. Eliminate Right to Work legislation
3. Market social responsibility as well as profitability
4. Outlaw subsidization of low paying jobs (irrespective of the Specific Vocational Preparation level of those jobs)
5. Provide longer term transition services for those entering the workforce

D. Recognize that Skill Training Is Not Always the Solution to Economic Downturn/High Unemployment

1. Promote use of case management teams, looking at whole person, improved assessment, and reality training/education about options
2. Reduce political pressure to do something quickly
3. Provide training on life skills management, especially financial management such as that offered at the Centers for New Directions

E. Program Measures of Success are Too Limited, Inconsistent among Agencies, Placement Driven and Oriented to "Quick Fix Solutions"

1. Trade schools and apprenticeship programs should be required to report on progress of students/completers
2. Automate procedures (makes more efficient use of time)
3. Expand 90 day placement component (often takes longer to place effectively. Might consider adding a job development component
4. Expand definition of "positive termination" to be more client driven and less program driven
5. Do not count pre-vocational time against time and money constraints

Miscellaneous Comments

1. Difficulty of serving multiple barrier clients and meeting performance standards
2. Competition between service providers
3. Need for more pre-employment training programs that are open entry/open exit
4. Need more training on financial system for line staff; i.e., accruals
5. Consider joint planning at State level
6. Improve employer information about JTPA by making presentations at Job Service Employee Committee meetings
7. Explore establishing a common recruitment, assessment, and referral agency
8. Accept other agency's certifying eligibility
9. Improve communication between Job Service and Food Stamp office
10. Improve and standardize placement definition

JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
LEWISTON
July 15, 1992

Following an overview of Job Training 2000, participants were divided into two groups to discuss and comment on the proposed legislation. Comments offered by the groups have been consolidated below.

Skill Centers

A consensus of opinion was that the legislation would place more administrative burdens on the existing programs without additional funding. The group felt that this extra layer of administration with its own burden of regulations and performance standards would not result in savings to the existing programs. The programs are already severely under funded and in need of more support from the State.

The group felt that the programs most impacted by this legislation (JTPA/ES) are already closely aligned in this Region's delivery system. These programs and others identified in the legislation operate in a cooperative environment to maximize limited resources available to the Region.

General consensus was that efforts to consolidate services should be encouraged but did not believe that they should be mandated legislatively. Instead, programs should have as much flexibility as possible to mesh with other programs to bring in all local providers based upon their needs. The Skill Centers may not be appropriate for some special groups and may result in reduced services.

Some felt there may be other incentives to bring additional programs/providers into a system that is already fairly integrated. Some also felt there was more of a need for a community wide information and referral center instead of a Skill Center as proposed by JT2000.

Skill Centers, as proposed, were not seen as very employer friendly or employer oriented and felt that the legislation downplayed the importance of the ES labor exchange activities.

Concern was also expressed regarding the legislation's requirement for a State Human Investment Council which would replace the Idaho Job Training Council and the Idaho State Council on Vocational Education. Participants felt that the existing structure allows each Council to focus their efforts on specific programs and objectives with much greater detail and oversight than would one super council. The existing structure also allows a great deal of latitude to coordinate and link their respective programs which is reflected in the current delivery system.

Certification

A general consensus on certification was that the existing requirements are adequate.

Voucher System

The group felt that a voucher system would be detrimental to Skill Center clients and other participants if the potential for a 20% holdback was in effect for classroom training as proposed. Schools would not, or could not, afford to take the high-risk multiple barrier clients and may lead to creaming from those who would be eligible.

Vouchers would tend to "single out" clients referred from Skill Centers.

A concern was expressed as to what happens to a client who wants to attend a school outside of the service delivery area? Out of state?

Miscellaneous Comments

JT2000 is geared more for the large urban cities than rural areas.

Performance Standards may drive the system and limit service to clients most in need.

Improvements to the Current Delivery System

The afternoon session was devoted to identifying barriers in the current delivery system and recommendations for improvement. The participants were separated into two groups who each identified various areas for improvement and selected or combined similar topics for further discussion. The major areas discussed have been consolidated below followed by miscellaneous topics and comments.

I. **Lack of information and/or understanding about available programs by both clients and other providers**

Recommendations:

A. Use of electronic billboards or other automated sources to inform users and providers. Consider systems that are in place that may be updated and accessible such as the Job Service's new Automated Labor Exchange System (ALEX) or the Career Information System (CIS) that is already used extensively in the employment and training community.

B. Greater use of handouts and pamphlets explaining various programs and services to clients.

C. More cross training of staff from various agencies and organizations for common skill building such as case management, assessment, problem solving, etc.

D. Focus on disseminating information through public presentations to community service organizations, at PIC meetings and other forums attended by local leaders, legislators and the general public. Development of a local speakers bureau.

E. Develop local referral card to help direct clients to appropriate services or an information card consisting of a menu of various services provided by participating agencies/ programs.

II. **Serving rural areas**

Recommendations:

A. Pilot new programs/systems in rural areas

B. Greater use of 800 phone numbers to reach clients

C. Conducting more joint outreach by cooperating programs and agencies
D. Experiment with satellite offices to co-op services
E. Explore use of program waivers to provide maximum flexibility for rural areas

III. **Financial Information System Improvements**

Recommendations:
A. Good clear information (what is needed, for what purpose, timeliness, with customer in mind)
B. On-line/Point of Sale--includes budget
C. Information system; i.e., timely and quick
D. Customer friendly
E. Common information sharing between agencies
F. Customer service a must
G. Confidentiality maintained

IV. **Assessment - Identifying the Needs of the Customer and Sharing Assessment Results and Information**

Recommendations:
A. Goals of clients need to be assessed in broad terms where information can be used by all providers of services
B. Formal and informational observations need to be shared
C. Client centered (client must decide/set goals/plans)
D. Automated retrievable information system regarding all available services and providers
E. Test results on-line; computer based

V. **Supportive Services**

Recommendations:
A. Directory--computerized/booklet list eligibility criteria
B. Agencies share information on available services, including rural service areas
C. Improve/increase mental health funding

VI. **Outreach**

Recommendations:
A. Coordinate transportation with school buses and Area Office on Aging
B. Contact legislative committee working on transportation (to encourage improving service)
C. Contact Transportation Department to identify services and grant possibilities

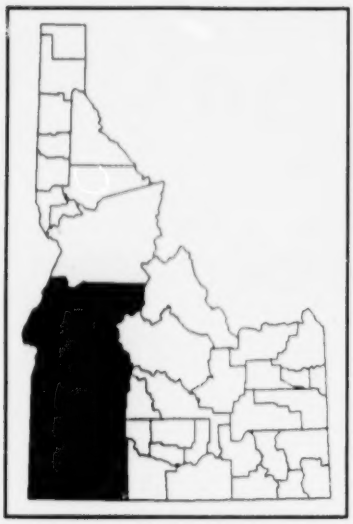
Miscellaneous Comments

1. Intake/eligibility serving government while the services to the clients almost become secondary to the process. JTPA requires too much from participants to enroll.
2. Involve employer support for services
    a. Apprenticeship program
    b. Transportation assistance to job
3. Realistic counseling on placement--relocation issues; visit potential job site, job shadowing
4. Dissimilar definitions and eligibility between programs.
5. Need more staff training and capacity building for service providers.

General Comments

1. Recommend use of universal intake/application for all programs. This would do more than anything else to streamline services and programs. Could be either computer-based or otherwise could be carried by client.

2. Need to be careful about confidentiality issue, if we resort to using computer-based application/intake etc., which would be accessible to several agencies.



JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
BOISE
July 16, 1992

After an overview of Job Training 2000, forum participants were divided into two groups to discuss the legislation. Participants generally agreed that the lack of detail in the legislation makes it difficult to analyze meaningfully. Comments offered by the two groups are consolidated below.

In general, this Region was concerned about the political motivation behind this legislation, and felt that it might well create **more** duplication, rather than less. These people clearly believe the whole package runs counter to an excellent system that is already in place in Idaho. In fact, there was some sentiment that the Feds appear to be asking states and PICs to do what they themselves cannot! Some participants stated that they do not believe that this bill will move the U.S. toward improved competitiveness and a world-class workforce.

There appears to be some support for more PIC involvement in the broad spectrum of employment and training programs and better coordination, but there was also some fear of this happening through the "Big Brother approach" to determining who plays, who pays, and who gets served.

Skill Centers

First off, this group felt that the term "Skill Center" is misleading and has led to much of the confusion and paranoia about the legislation. A suggestion was received to rename these Centers "Intake/Assessment Centers."

Currently a modified Skill Center approach operates in Region III in that the PIC acts as a single point of entry for JTPA Titles II/A and II/B and the Job Service operates as the single point of entry for labor exchange, Veterans' programs, JTPA Title III, etc. There was considerable discussion about legislative intent regarding Skill Centers--do they mean a physical structure or would a network of programs that are linked electronically meet the requirements of a Skill Center??? One group generally supported a single point of entry concept if it did include electronic assistance and not just "a building with physical co-location."

There was some sentiment that one stop shops might result in more comprehensive, less fragmented assessment to participants and that it would certainly be more convenient to the consumer to operate this way, but that this legislation doesn't appear to further this purpose in a positive manner. Several participants questioned what would happen if PICs and Skill Centers reach an impasse in negotiating agreements for operation of the Center.

The lack of inclusion of secondary schools was a concern to some; these people believe that drop-out prevention and in-school youth programs are valuable. The impact of this legislation on Services to Veterans was of concern to some of the participants as well. Concerns were raised about designating several different agencies as Skill Centers and the resulting complications to statewide coordination and service support systems. This would be particularly harmful to delivery of such programs as Veteran Services which are offered statewide through the Job Service offices.

It was suggested that a Region such as this would need the flexibility to structure Skill Centers in such a way that the services can be taken to the people in rural areas.

One question was raised as to who will pay for the additional services, as did the question of whether this will ultimately result in a greater (tax) burden on employers. One employer questioned whether designation of Job Service as a Skill Center would change the basic mission of Job Service away from labor exchange and expressed concern that whatever is estab hed will have to be understood by and acceptable to employers.

On the issue of how Skill Centers are to be funded, there was some concern about how funding would be arranged when an individual was a client of more than one agency.

Certification

It was suggested that the role of the PIC regarding certification of classroom training may be unnecessary and that the PIC's role in certification might best be limited to OJT.

It was generally believed that certification of proprietary schools would be a welcome change, as some of these have poor performance records.

Vouchering

Regarding vouchers, there was considerable discussion about the fact that vouchers might actually limit a client's choices in that the amount of a given voucher might only cover training expenses at one institution.

The issue of obligating expenditures for an entire year through vouchers was seen as problematic.

Questions arose as to whether schools can reject vouchers. Schools may not be willing to accept students who can't pay 100% up front and creaming may result. Another possibility is that schools might raise fees to recoup the 20% holdback up front.

Another question arose as to who approves private employers for OJT vouchering and what the process is for this. A related question regarded whether an individual would have to stay with the same employer to meet the 90-day retention requirement.

This Region stated that the best system the Feds could develop would be to create goals and objectives for the employment and training system and to let each state develop its own plan and strategy for meeting its respective needs.

In order to implement this legislation conceptually, waivers will be needed on definitions, data collection requirements, planning schedules, and information exchange.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT DELIVERY SYSTEM
REGION III

The process for recommending improvements to the current delivery system involved separating participants into two groups, each of which identified three topics to discuss in detail. Following these group discussions, participants were given an opportunity to offer additional comments on ways to improve services. The discussions covered a wide variety of topics which have been consolidated below. Recommendations included improving information sharing among agencies, and better defining of quality. Group topics are presented first, followed by miscellaneous comments.

Group Topic Suggestions

There is a need for more information sharing among agencies. This is true as it relates participant information and to agency information (services available, eligibility criteria, etc.)

Recommendations

1. Create an electronic database wherein client data could be taken at one station and shared with related agencies
   Would require:
   - common intake forms (reduction in forms required by individual agencies)
   - client consent
   - relaxation of confidentiality laws/regulations
   - some screening of information (Not all agencies need to know <u>everything</u> about a given client)

2. Create an electronic database which describes services available at the various agencies, eligibility factors, etc.
   This might entail:
   - use of a bulletin board concept or a "billboard"(?)
   - production in hard copy as well
   - development and updating by the Southwest Idaho PIC
   - key individuals working with the various program should be identified and organized by program/service area
   - could be designed in such a way as to be available for customers

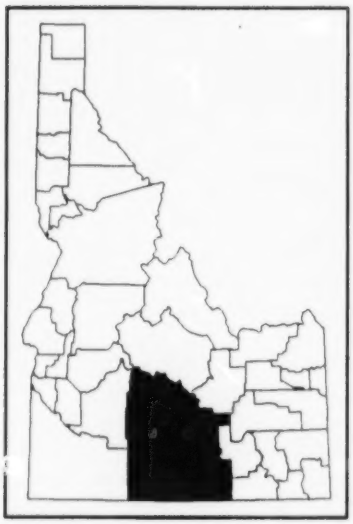
3. Create an electronic mechanism to consolidate intake processes and eligibility determination processes (ties in with #1 above)
   This would entail:
   - creation by a team representing all agencies
   - designing a process that is client-sensitive (which respects privacy) and customer-friendly (might produce a printout telling clients what services are available to meet their needs)
   - consolidates all eligibility factors into one form/questionnaire
   - possible creation of an "eligibility credit card"

Participants generally agreed that any automation described above should be jointly funded by participating agencies (PICs, CIS, SCOVE, ABE, DOE, etc.) and would require on-going dedicated commitment.

4. Quality Customer Service
   - We need to define what all agencies mean by quality and how this is measured.
   - We need to recognize that individuals and employers are our customers - not the system.
   - The system needs to view services from a TQM perspective.
   - The system needs to be competency or outcome based.

Miscellaneous Comments

1. Definitions among agencies are not consistent; these should be standardized.
2. Participant materials are not geared to the literacy level of the population. This relates to the reading level and the lack of bi-lingual materials at the appropriate level.
3. Some participants' training needs do not fit into the standard college semester format. There is a perceived lack of availability of skill training to meet alternative needs. Considerable discussion about the source of this problem and that it may be due in part to lack of communication between institutions and program staff.
4. JOBS staff suggested a need for mentors/tutors/volunteer coordinators.
5. Human resource needs are assessed by each agency every year or so; these should be consolidated into a single, common needs assessment.
6. Some concern was expressed that work experience is limited to the public sector; it was suggested that use of internships would help here.
7. Planning calendars should be standardized.
8. Costs should be defined for the information sharing network described above.
9. Training should be set up for implementing the information sharing network.
10. Federal waivers should be sought as necessary to implement information sharing network.
11. A statewide database should be used in the information sharing network.
12. Considerable support was expressed for more meetings of this nature, especially as an interim strategy to the development of a common database!!!!



JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
TWIN FALLS
August 4, 1992

After an overview of Job Training 2000, forum participants were divided into three groups to discuss the legislation. In general, the participants all agreed that the lack of detail in the legislation made analysis difficult. Also, most felt that the current delivery system is working and that the proposed legislation would have a disruptive impact. While most believe that the current system needs some improvements, they felt these could be accomplished more efficiently without the mandates of the new legislation. Comments offered by the three groups have been consolidated below.

Skill Centers

Most felt that the current system was working fine and preferred the present system of service providers which includes specialized programs such as the Idaho Migrant Council, Center for New Directions, and Adult Basic Education Centers. There was concern about the future of these specialized programs under the new legislation. A former JTPA participant felt that the current system of specialized providers should be maintained and that it would "be horrible to be required to go to one central place."

It was felt that the term "Skill Center" is a misnomer as actual training would not be provided on-site. Concern was also expressed that this legislation favors those attached to the current delivery system and that it would be difficult to bring new clients into the system. The pay-to-play requirement may also be a major barrier to participation by some service providers.

Some felt that the current Job Service programs, which operate in a network with other service providers, results in a delivery system similar to the Skill Center concept. However, there was concern that the Unemployment Insurance program was excluded from the Skill Centers. It was noted that many UI claimants have low educational levels and limited skills and would be in need of the informational and referral services offered at the Skill Centers.

Although the legislation espouses streamlining and non-duplication, several participants were concerned that the legislation would increase administrative costs. It was also suggested that requiring Pell Grant participants to visit the Skill Centers would be more burdensome for the client, as well as, for the administration of the program. Some felt that most of the mandated programs' staff have responsibilities not covered by the Skill Centers and that assigning these staff to a Center would be disruptive to their programs.

Some felt that the single application process and the concept of improving access to services were good ideas. However, the participants preferred working to improve the current system by developing common eligibility procedures, assessment tools, and improving information exchange among programs.

One suggestion, which received some support, was that if this legislation is passed, the entire State of Idaho should be exempted from the Skill Center requirements by virtue of its rural nature.

Certification

There was general agreement that the certification procedures in place should be utilized (and/or modified as necessary), rather than create another layer of certification requirements. Proprietary training programs are limited and their performance is usually well-known in the local employment and training community.

There were concerns regarding how the PIC and its staff could handle certification requirements without sizable staff increases and Council membership expansion. This would also result in increasing administrative costs. One person commented that we should work on the current training system to insure training leads to placement in related fields and at a livable wage.

Vouchering

The proposed vouchering system was met with widespread disapproval. Many felt that the 80% payment provision would result in a reduction of available training options for Skill Center participants as schools would recruit students who would pay full fees up front. Also, there was concern that schools would raise fees to cover the risks of serving Skill Center participants. Many felt that the requirement to limit vouchers to the total amount of funds available would reduce service levels. Several participants expressed concern that small providers would be hurt by the 20% holdback on vouchers. Some felt that the 80% payment would make it prohibitive for many private and public providers to accept participants. Most felt that the follow-up requirements were too burdensome and costly. It was suggested that institutions may curtail group programs in favor of individualized referrals.

The notion that vouchers would increase choice and result in improved quality of training was challenged by a number of participants; many believed that the primary result would be more clever advertising on the part of the providers. Several felt that the proposed vouchering policies would result in increasing the use of the on-the-job training component which has been sharply criticized at the national level.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT DELIVERY SYSTEM
REGION IV

The process for recommending improvements to the current delivery system involved separating participants into three groups, each of whom identified three topics to discuss in detail. Following these group discussions, participants were given an opportunity to offer additional comments on ways to improve services. The discussions covered a wide variety of topics which have been consolidated below. Recommendations included identifying mechanisms to improve information sharing, promoting common intake and eligibility procedures, improving supportive services, and developing suitable jobs at a livable wage. The group topics are presented first, followed by miscellaneous comments.

Group Topic Suggestions

A. Information Sharing

1. Programs need to make presentations to other agencies
2. PIC should take the lead in coordinating and facilitating information sharing
3. Schedule regular meetings of service providers (possibly at different service provider sites) for cross training of front line staff
4. Computerize information on services--utilize common linkages such as the Career Information System
5. Create a shared database at the State level
6. Improvements in data sharing must be done in a manner which will not cause a decrease in service provider staff or participant services
7. Conduct a public information/marketing campaign directed at employers, participants, and the general public
8. Program brochures and recruitment must be user friendly
9. Expand the College of Southern Idaho's orientation video to include representatives from different programs
10. Use the Job Service Employer Committees for marketing various programs and services to employer community
11. Conduct more program marketing efforts through community service organizations

B. Common Intake/Eligibility

1. Standardize eligibility definitions; i.e., low income criteria
2. Use a common intake/application for ES, JTPA, and UI in Job Service offices
3. Issue one eligibility certificate for all programs/agencies
4. Develop common database
5. Review confidentiality rules and information release requirements
6. Improvements should be cost effective and should not be interpreted as a request for more automation at the expense staff or client services

C. Supportive Services Limitations are Too Restrictive

1. Participants need more assistance with supportive services including transportation, child care, and drug and alcohol counseling
2. Seek waivers on the requirement to charge work experience to supportive services
3. Develop Regional transportation system and work with local advisory boards established by the Department of Transportation

4. Increase accessibility of child care block grant, develop a common database for this grant, inform clients of the potential benefits prior to completing the forms, and increase reimbursement rate for child care under this grant

D. Suitable Jobs at a Livable Wage

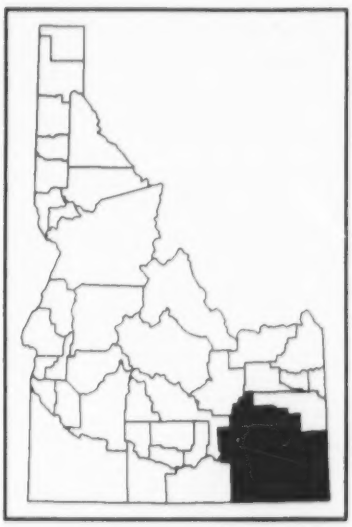
1. Encourage the education and service community to emphasize high skill training and improve career options
2. Promote high skill training earlier in the education and service delivery systems
3. Promote more vocational training, apprenticeships, work experience, cooperative education, tech-prep

Miscellaneous Comments

1. Program development should emphasize "bottoms up" processes to more accurately reflect client needs
2. Improve funding for mental health services
3. Administrative funding needs to be increased for PICs and service providers

The following comments were offered for PIC consideration:

4. Services are too concentrated in Twin Falls and rural areas do not get served
5. System does not reach individuals outside of existing human resource system
6. Poor performers continue to get funded
7. Supportive services are too restricted



JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
POCATELLO
August 5, 1992

After an overview of the Job Training 2000, the group was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed legislation. Comments from the group have been consolidated and are summarized below.

While the potential for more local control of service delivery appealed to a number of participants, the most frequent response given when asked for weaknesses in the legislation concerned the capability (or lack thereof) of PICs to meet the additional responsibilities envisioned in the legislation. Several individuals questioned whether PICs had the time, expertise, or objectivity to perform the functions outlined in the legislation.

A number of observations were made about the politicality of this piece of legislation on both ends of the spectrum. On the positive side, it was suggested that regardless of the motive for proposing this legislation, if it will bring about positive change, we should embrace it. On the other hand, it was also postulated that this legislation was far more politically/re-election-driven than client-driven and that we shouldn't waste our time and money analyzing it!!!

Elimination of duplication between service providers was seen as a strength of the legislation; creation of a duplicative layer of administrative requirements was seen as a major weakness. One participant stated that this legislation "simply establishes another government bureaucracy instead of strengthening those systems that are already in place that provide all of these proposed services."

Skill Centers

Several individuals suggested changing the name "Skill Center" to "Intake Center" or "Assessment Center," as the current name is in large part responsible for the confusion and paranoia that exists about the legislation.

When asked to identify the positive aspects of this legislation, responses ranged from "nothing!" to "The one stop Skill Center is the most attractive piece of the legislation. Agencies do not voluntarily share resources to the benefit of the client in all cases. No matter how well the system in Region V is running, it could always be improved. The two outreach centers being established in Soda Springs and in Preston are good examples of how a Skill Center could function, wherein multiple agencies have come together to bring services to rural areas. The PIC's role should be limited to that of a facilitator of the negotiations that need to take place between the various agencies and that of evaluating performance against established goals NOT day to day management of Skill Centers."

Many individuals saw the creation of Skill Centers as an opportunity to improve communication between service providers.

Several participants felt the creation of Skill Centers would actually increase service to rural areas, although an equal number feared that it might limit service in these areas and "reflect a 'large metropolitan' mentality that gets stuffed down rural communities throats."

Better assessment was seen as a positive feature to the legislation by some participants.

When asked to comment on the weaknesses of this legislation, responses ranged from "flawed legislation" to "The Federal government appears to be creating a model for Skills Centers that might work in Chicago or Los Angeles, but is totally wrong for a state like Idaho. The government needs to consider a model that meets both urban and rural needs."

A significant number of respondents supported the notions of improved access to clients and improved coordination between service deliverers through the use of one stop shops, but questioned whether the one stop concept as proposed will meet Idaho's needs. One participant suggested that the entire State of Idaho should be exempted from the Skill Center model requirements because of its rural nature and the fact that meeting these requirements could limit access to services to many of the more rural areas.

The lack of funding for the legislation in general, and the Skill Centers in particular, was raised as a major concern by a number of individuals.

Some participants felt that Vocational Education and the Unemployment Insurance program should be "mandatory" players in Skill Centers, if there is to be such a thing as "mandatory" and "optional" players.

The potential for elimination of small service providers was seen by some as a major flaw in the legislation.

Several participants stated that development of a strong case management system would work just as well in reducing duplication as this legislative package.

Certification

Certification requirements were specifically cited as duplicative of current accreditation/certification processes with the exception that certification of proprietary schools was seen as positive.

It was suggested that the PIC's role in certification appears to be that of a rubber stamp.

Vouchering

There was little, if any, support for the vouchering system; many believe that the 20% holdbacks will create financial hardships for providers, particularly small providers and will result in creaming of participants.

One participant suggested that the vouchering system won't do all of the wonderful things envisioned because we don't have many private schools to "compete" with. We have primarily State sponsored institutions, who don't/can't compete with each other. Under these conditions, all the voucher system does is add a lot of unnecessary red tape.

In general, the Region V participants believe that they have an excellent system and work well together and question whether overlaying another bureaucratic system will improve this.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRENT DELIVERY SYSTEM
REGION V

The process for recommending improvements to the current delivery system in other regions involved separating participants into small groups, each of which identified three topics to discuss in detail. The Region V group remained intact and did not have time to identify three top issues for discussion. Therefore, topics are listed that were raised by more than one individual.

1. There is competition among service providers for limited funds and for clients, which hinders working together.

2. There is a significant amount of duplication in the services offered by the various providers.

3. Little or no duplication of services exists in Region V because service providers work well together and are not "turf conscious."

4. There is rampant paranoia among service providers; service providers are very territorial.

5. Requiring service providers to meet all specified demographics limits that providers potential for success.

6. There is never enough money to meet the needs of either the clients or the service providers.

7. Service providers do not communicate with each other often enough. Staff from one agency often does not know what is being offered by another, what changes are taking place, and how they can help each other. THIS ISSUE (stated in many ways, paraphrased here) WAS CITED BY MORE PARTICIPANTS THAN ANY OTHER!!!

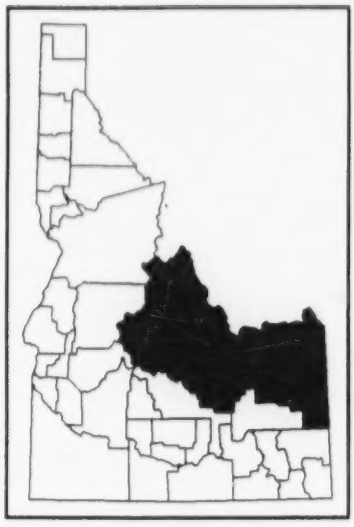
8. Participants are often required to repeat the same information for different providers.

9. Funding decisions favor Pocatello at the expense of outlying areas.

10. Clients are not given a thorough enough assessment/career counseling.

Recommendations

1. Establish regularly scheduled meetings of the various human resource service providers to share information, changes in program offerings, concerns about barriers in serving clients, etc.
2. Common intake forms should be developed
3. Agencies should have computer access to other programs' enrollment information
4. Issues regarding procurement were referred to local PIC staff



JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
IDAHO FALLS
August 6, 1992

Following an overview of Job Training 2000, forum participants were invited to comment on the legislation. The comments have been consolidated below.

Skill Centers

There was a consensus that Skill Centers have some advantages, such as easier access to services in the same proximity or mandating the consolidation of services. However, the group felt that Skill Centers would not result in a smooth transition between programs if each always maintains its own structure and requirements. Common assessment and eligibility factors would serve to streamline programs to a much higher degree than a common access point.

The group felt that Skill Centers may be more suited to urban areas than to rural areas. Rural areas would be better served by other non-mandatory methods to coordinate services such as the use of satellite offices.

Attendees stated that the legislation must provide enough flexibility to design services and programs that are appropriate for the area. With some local prerogatives and flexibility, PICs would be able to design a system. Even so, programs would be severely limited without new resources. Currently PIC members, who volunteer their time, are already operating at capacity to oversee JTPA services.

Concerns were also expressed that the costs of additional administrative functions would negatively impact existing programs and ultimately result in fewer clients served. The group did not agree that shared costs for Skill Center facilities would result in any savings to offset additional administrative costs imposed by the legislation. The commenters noted, however, that their current shared facilities in Idaho Falls did enhance opportunities to serve common clients.

Certification

The participants felt there should be some system of certifying all training institutions including a process that would deal with those in neighboring states. Certification is best left to state decisions in which a system is already in place and could be modified to be less cumbersome than the one proposed. Locally, there are few proprietary institutions in the Region because of its rural nature. The success or failure of proprietary institutions to provide quality training is readily known and dealt with accordingly by local referring providers.

Vouchers

The group felt there is really nothing positive about a voucher system. As proposed, it would make it difficult for program managers to manage their limited training resources. It would penalize training institutions with holdback for reasons it has no control over, such as clients who choose to drop out. Vouchers may lead training institutions to look at program participants differently or discriminate against them because of the holdback.

Vouchers in rural areas with limited training opportunities will not provide additional choice for clients. Participants questioned how vouchers would be used between areas or for out-of-state training.

Other comments:

The legislation does not address the current program problems of insufficient funding, barriers between programs such as eligibility, and administrative burdens for oversight and reporting requirements.

The capabilities of PICs to provide this additional oversight may be overestimated with limited resources, qualifications and volunteer time.

Improvements to the Current Delivery System

The afternoon session was devoted to identifying barriers and concerns with the current delivery system and recommendations for improvements. The major areas discussed have been outlined below.

I. **Program Design**

A. Problems encountered in a rural area include limited, if any, training options for meaningful employment.

B. Transportation to training opportunities is a barrier to participation.

C. Rural job markets may not fit the program's required outcomes (permanent placement versus seasonal jobs) coupled with resistance to relocate for employment.

Recommendations

1. Programs must have reasonable expectations for training outcomes that reflect local economies.
2. Programs for clients who are not ready or capable of successfully completing technical skill training need to be developed.
3. Develop/offer more basic skills and pre-employment skills training.
4. Need flexibility in the programs to allow locally developed projects to train for local employment needs.

II. **Employer Related Concerns**

A. Lack of employer follow-up to ascertain reasons for participant failure or suggestions to improve services/ program.

B. Not permitted to use a proven screening tool for employer (GATB/VG); need outside screening agent for job listings and assistance for Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

C. Employers' labor force needs are not known by training community.

Recommendations

1. There is a need for more labor market information at the local level.
2. Improve communications between the employer community and the employment and training sector to identify their labor needs.

III. **Informational Concerns**

A. Potential clients and employers are not informed about the services that are available.

B. There is a need for more communication and understanding of cultural diversity, including language issues.

C. There is a need for more informational sharing between program providers.

Recommendations

1. Provide more information on the distinction between training and placement programs.
2. Greater utilization of Job Service Employer Committees to disseminate information to employers regarding PICs, JTPA, JOBS, VRS, etc.
3. Improve coordination between Employment and Training programs to reduce duplication; increase and schedule regular joint staff meetings, planning, and training efforts; develop or use common materials for assessment and testing.

IV. **Administrative and Service Provider Concerns**

A. Problems in retaining OJTs.
B. Lack of post placement services.
C. Current system encourages creaming.
D. Program requirements that are meaningless (i.e., 7th grade reading assessment for dislocated workers).
E. Different eligibility requirements between programs.
F. Common client data elements that are required by all programs that are duplicated for each program.
G. Coordinating programs that require different planning cycles.
H. Program management by PICs need to be cognizant of the impact stipulations put on service providers; geographical, limited target groups, demographic limitations. The duplication of services by providers, inequality of treatment between providers, and performance requirement ties to funding. (It was noted that these were not all Region VI issues).
I. The employability planning requirements for JTPA prevent providers from addressing barriers; conflict with local labor market realities.

Recommendations

1. Programs designed to provide longer term and quality services to prepare for placement.
2. Reduce conflict between risk of taking harder to serve client and meeting performance standard.
3. Development of common databases wherever feasible and other processes to share client information between programs/agencies.

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JOB TRAINING 2000 FORUM
July 14, 1992

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August 5, 1992

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September 30, 1992

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STATE LEADERSHIP MEETING
November 30, 1992

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